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Increased state support essential to higher education affordability and quality

Years of budget cuts have made college less affordable and less accessible for students, according to a new report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The report finds that, while spending crept upward by \$263 per student over the last year, Ohio is spending \$1,059 less per student than it did in 2008, a cut of more than 15 percent.

“Public investment in higher education is how we make and keep college affordable,” said Hannah Halbert, researcher with Policy Matters Ohio. “Sharing the costs, rather than shifting the costs to individual students and their families ensures we have accessible institutions, a skilled workforce, and shared opportunity.”

The report also showed that tuition at Ohio’s four-year public institutions has been relatively stable since 2008, increasing by 5.4 percent. This was the second-smallest increase in the nation. While tuition freezes have held tuition relatively steady, doing more with less has consequences. Funding cuts weaken educational quality by reducing faculty and course offerings. In Ohio, these measures have led to real problems with affordability. A separate report released by the Institute for Research on Higher Education ranked Ohio 45th in the nation in terms of higher education affordability.

“Ohio was already pricey, so even with cost cutting measures and tuition freezes, Ohio still ranks low in terms of affordability,” said Halbert. “Continuing to ask public institutions to do more with less will not lead to better educated students. Ohio can reverse course by sharing the cost.”

The Center’s full report can be found <http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/funding-down-tuition-up>.

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